



July 25, 2017

AAAS Encourages Congressional Appropriators to Invest in Research and Innovation

Our nation's research enterprise is among the most powerful engines of American prosperity, producing value far beyond the sum of its individual parts. A consistent area of bipartisan agreement over the past 70 years has been the importance of the federal government's role in supporting research and innovation.

The U.S. House of Representatives has ignored some of the drastic cuts proposed by the Trump Administration in its FY 2018 budget request, and we are encouraged to see increases for agencies such as the National Institutes of Health. However, we continue to be extremely concerned about the proposed elimination or targeted cuts to programs that advance research, such as ARPA-E at the Department of Energy and programs at the National Institute for Standards and Technology, or to dramatically reduce funding in environmental and climate science disciplines within a number of key agencies. American prosperity relies on advancing basic and use-inspired research and scientific fields that can help inform policies for a sustainable future.

We are pleased to see U.S. Senate appropriators work to resolve proposals that were advanced in the House in order to preserve critical investments for science and engineering research, including programs at the Department of Energy.

Federal investment in research remains far below what would bring the greatest return to American taxpayers. Both defense and non-defense discretionary spending have been cut disproportionately for many years. Discretionary spending is not the driver of federal budget growth or deficits. Protecting both defense and non-defense spending is an important principle that Congressional representatives have recognized. On three separate occasions, Congress has acted to limit the worst effects of sequestration on both parts of the discretionary budget. We encourage Congress to do so again.

For many decades, the American people and our economy have reaped the enormous benefits of federally-supported research investments. It is time again for the bipartisan foresight of U.S. policymakers to prevail in support of research.

- Rush Holt, chief executive officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

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